Suicide by Handloom workers in A.P.

1538. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether two powerloom workers committed suicide in the Sircilla town of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what were the main reasons for their committing suicide;

(c) whether Government has considered any steps to prevent suicides by weaver in the State of Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) to what extent they have been helpful to meet the weavers demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI BASANAGOUDA R. PATIL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Information collected from Government of Andhra Pradesh reveal that two powerloom workers committed suicide on account of financial difficulties. Their families have confirmed that they were suffering from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as well.

(c) and (d) The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported several relief measures, which include moral counseling, prohibition of adulterated liquor and toddy, introduction of food for work programme, conduct of health camps, extension of relief measures such as free distribution of rice, old age and widow pensions and technical counseling to emphasize the need for modernization of looms. Government of India has been taking several measures to improve technological levels and marketability of products, by deputing technical officers of Powerloom Service Centre, Hyderabad, for providing guidance and training to weavers; organizing an awareness campaign through the south India Textile Research Association; setting up a powerloom centre development committee in Andhra Pradesh by the Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council; and extending marketing and design support through NIFT, Hyderabad to the local weavers. These measures are based on the weaver's demands.